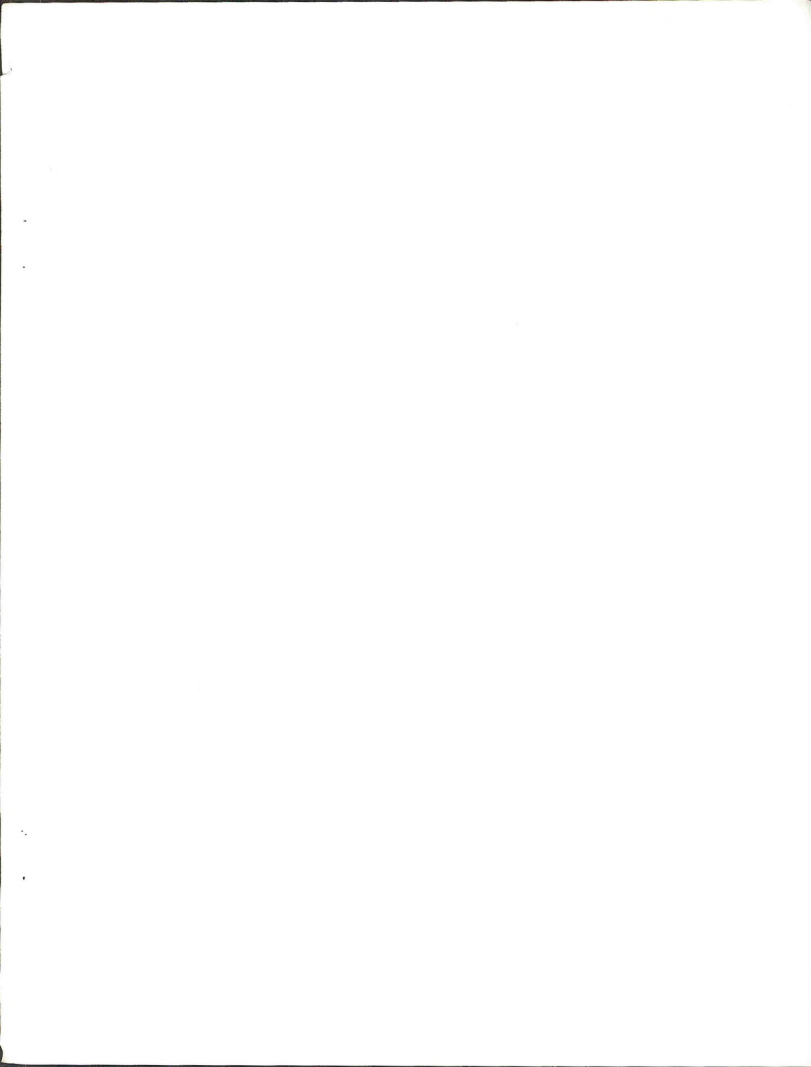


AN EVALUATION OF SELECTED  
HEALTH OCCUPATIONS  
TRAINING PROGRAMS  
FALL 1975

Conducted By  
The  
MONTANA ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
P. O. BOX 1157  
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## INTRODUCTION

### RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

In the fall of 1975 the Montana Advisory Council for Vocational Education reviewed seven health occupations training programs in Montana. The programs selected for review were carried out at the postsecondary level and funded in part by revenue available for vocational education. Programs were located at five postsecondary vocational education centers, one community college and one four-year university unit. The one exception was a high school health occupation orientation program.

The objectives were to make:

1. An assessment of schools offering health occupation courses assisted by vocational education funds.
2. An assessment of job opportunities and placement in the field of health occupations.
3. An assessment of the program to meet student and employer needs.
4. An assessment of program operation and administration under the system of multiple boards and agencies.

### PROCEDURES FOLLOWED IN THE STUDY

The Council utilized teams of three or four council members and one staff member for each review. Questionnaires were used to interview students, instructors, and administrators.

### BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

The schools surveyed are funded by the Board of Public Education and are conducted by local administration. They must also comply with state vo-ed regulations. Nearly every phase of health occupations has licensing and registration requirements which the schools must maintain. Two of the units are under the control of the Board of Regents. Financial support, rules, and procedures of postsecondary institutions offering vocationally supported health occupations are very complex.



## OBSERVATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The observations in this report are those of the reviewing teams that interviewed students, instructors, administrators, and chatted with local advisory council members during our recent visits to the five postsecondary vo-tech centers, Miles Community College and Northern Montana College.

TABLE 1

Student, instructor, and administrator questionnaires did not always contain similar statements.

TABLE 1  
RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENTS

STATEMENT*	Number of Responses**								
	STUDENT			INSTRUCTOR			ADMINISTRATOR		
	A	N	D	A	N	D	A	N	D
1. Adequate instructor time is allowed to co-ordinate all student learning activities.	-	-	-	15	3	6	11	1	3
2. A greater proportion of student time should be spent in student participation than actually occurs.	126	80	113	9	0	15	7	0	8
3. A greater proportion of student time should be spent in small group sessions.	127	87	111	5	4	13	3	2	10
4. The schedule of teaching time is too fixed.	74	80	172	3	3	18	3	0	12
5. Sufficient learning opportunities are provided to practice skills in the work environment.	226	53	43	19	2	2	17	0	0
6. Classroom topics are scheduled in a progressive sequence.	278	28	18	20	2	2	14	1	0





Table 1 continued:

STATEMENT	STUDENT	INSTRUCTOR	ADMINISTRATOR
	A N D	A N D	A N D
7. Classroom topics are coordinated with work experience.	240 43 42	19 2 3	15 0 0
8. There is sufficient pre-planning for scheduled lessons.	- - -	20 0 4	12 1 2
9. The laboratory setting is a valuable adjunct to the classroom.	- - -	22 0 2	- - -
10. The availability of books, visual aids and other learning materials is adequate to permit student mastery of program objectives.	267 18 41	24 0 0	- - -
11. The classroom is adequate and conducive to learning.	232 36 57	19 1 4	- - -
12. Adequate safety precautions are provided students.	267 50 8	23 0 0	- - -
13. Storage areas safely and adequately accommodate special equipment, apparatus, glassware, chemicals and supplies.	- - -	21 1 2	- - -
14. Instructor's office and workspace has been provided.	- - -	15 1 7	- - -
15. The local supervisor and/or vocational director assists the teacher in program decision making.	- - -	22 1 0	15 0 0

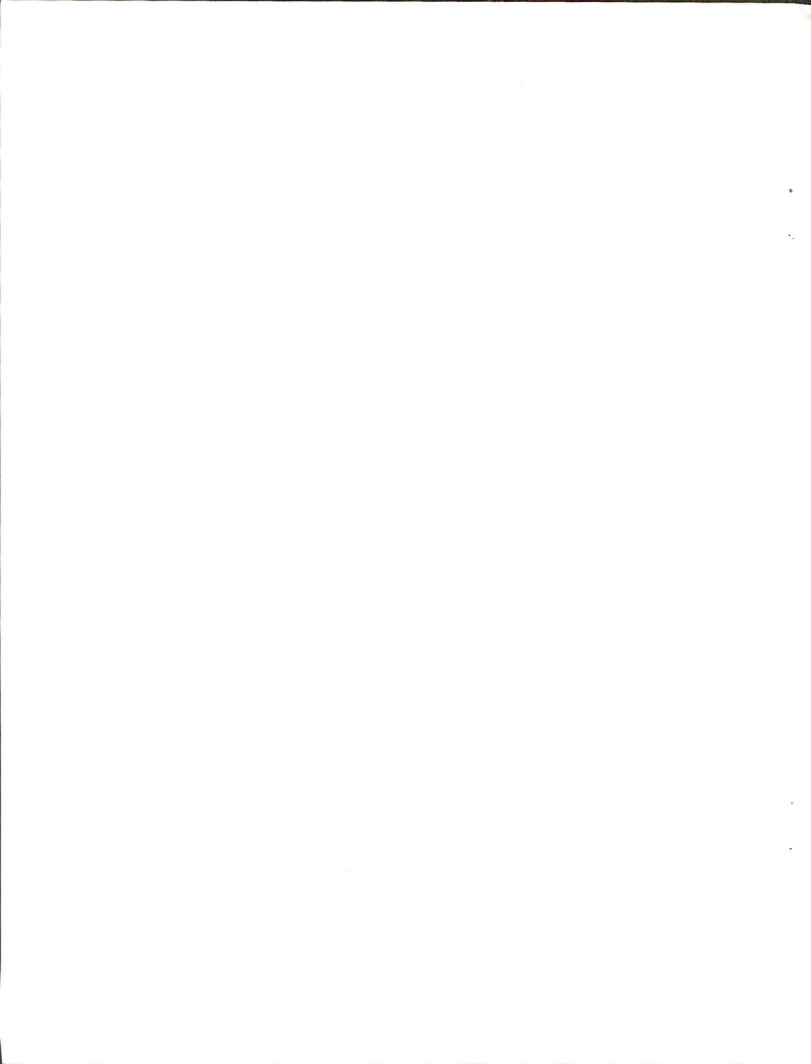


Table 1 continued:

STATEMENT	STUDENT			INSTRUCTOR			ADMINISTRATOR		
	A	N	D	A	N	D	A	N	D
16. The program's philosophy is consistent with the goals for health occupations programs and is planned jointly by administration, faculty and advisory committee.	-	-	-	22	2	0	15	0	0
17. There is a written contractual agreement between school and training station which is reviewed annually and revised as necessary.	-	-	-	23	1	0	14	1	0
18. The instructors annually identify budgetary needs and communicate them to the administration.	-	-	-	20	2	1	14	0	1
19. The health occupations advisory committee evaluates the program yearly as to its meeting the employment needs of the health community.	-	-	-	14	3	6	10	1	3
20. Progress reports based on preformance objectives are used by the faculty in counseling students.	243	53	30	23	1	0	15	0	0
21. Information on professional organizations relating to the health field is available to students.	196	96	33	23	1	0	14	1	0
22. Student enrollment with name and address is maintained for each program.	-	-	-	24	0	0	14	1	0

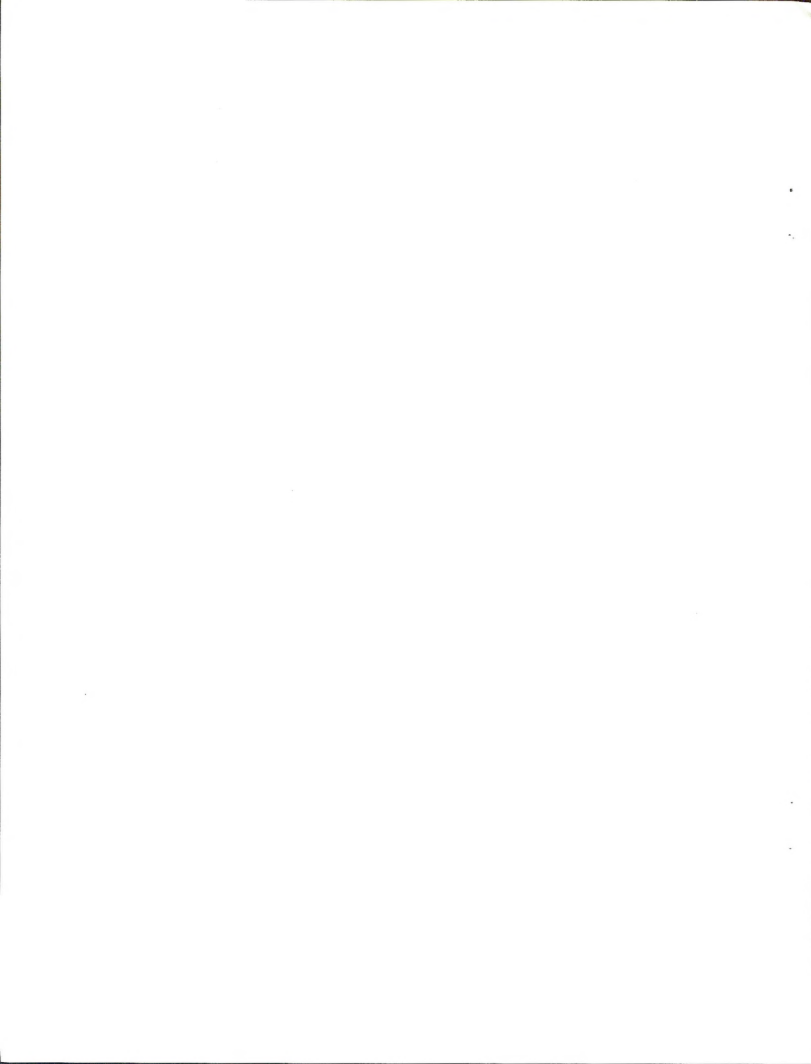


Table 1 continued:

STATEMENT	STUDENT	INSTRUCTOR	ADMINISTRATOR
	A N D	A N D	A N D
23. An annual follow-up survey of completers and early leavers is conducted and on file to determine if they are being successfully employed in the general field of their training.	- - -	15 4 4	13 1 0
24. Adequate program objectives are written and followed.	- - -	24 1 0	- - -
25. The teacher-student ratio is adequate to provide proper instruction.	- - -	13 5 6	- - -
26. All health services training needs are being met in your community with present programs available.	- - -	11 3 9	4 1 9
27. The local advisory committee is actively involved in program curriculum development and revision.	- - -	13 2 7	11 2 2
28. Adequate numbers of health occupations teachers are provided through pre-service teacher education.	- - -	10 1 7	2 4 9
29. Adequate in-service teacher education is provided teachers in the field to assist them in meeting requirements and to keep up the current and new trends.	- - -	11 3 7	8 4 2
30. The school's general faculty collaborates in planning the total education program.	- - -	- - -	11 2 2



Table 1 continued:

STATEMENT	STUDENT	INSTRUCTOR	ADMINISTRATOR
	A N D	A N D	A N D
31. Students provide input in the planning of the educational program.	111 94 120	- - -	- - -
32. The school provides adequate placement services to student completers.	111 94 120	- - -	- - -
33. The training lab is adequate and conducive to learning.	229 54 52	- - -	- - -
34. Lab experience time provided is sufficient to adequately prepare students for experiences to be encountered on the job.	192 87 52	- - -	- - -

\*Not necessarily in same numerical order as found on each questionnaire.

\*\*Total Responses: Student, 327; Instructor, 24; Administrator, 15.  
Key: A = Agree; N = Neutral or Don't Know; D = Disagree.

Although students and instructors whose responses are summarized in this table represent several different health occupation education programs, there is remarkable similarity in the opinions expressed. Part of the similarity, to be sure, may be due to the fact that the instruments used in the study were not tested or adjusted for validity and reliability. Exceptions to the similarity of responses are in statements two and three. Students and administrators were about equally divided on whether more time should be spent in participation, and in small-group sessions; instructors were generally opposed.

Some statements were given to students only, e.g., no's 31 through 34, and others were limited to instructors and administrators. Responses to no.31 showed students in general disagreed that they were involved in program planning, and responses to no.32 showed by far the majority either felt placement services were adequate, or else had no opinion.

Generally, these responses by all three groups indicate satisfaction with the operation of programs in health-related occupational education in the Montana system.

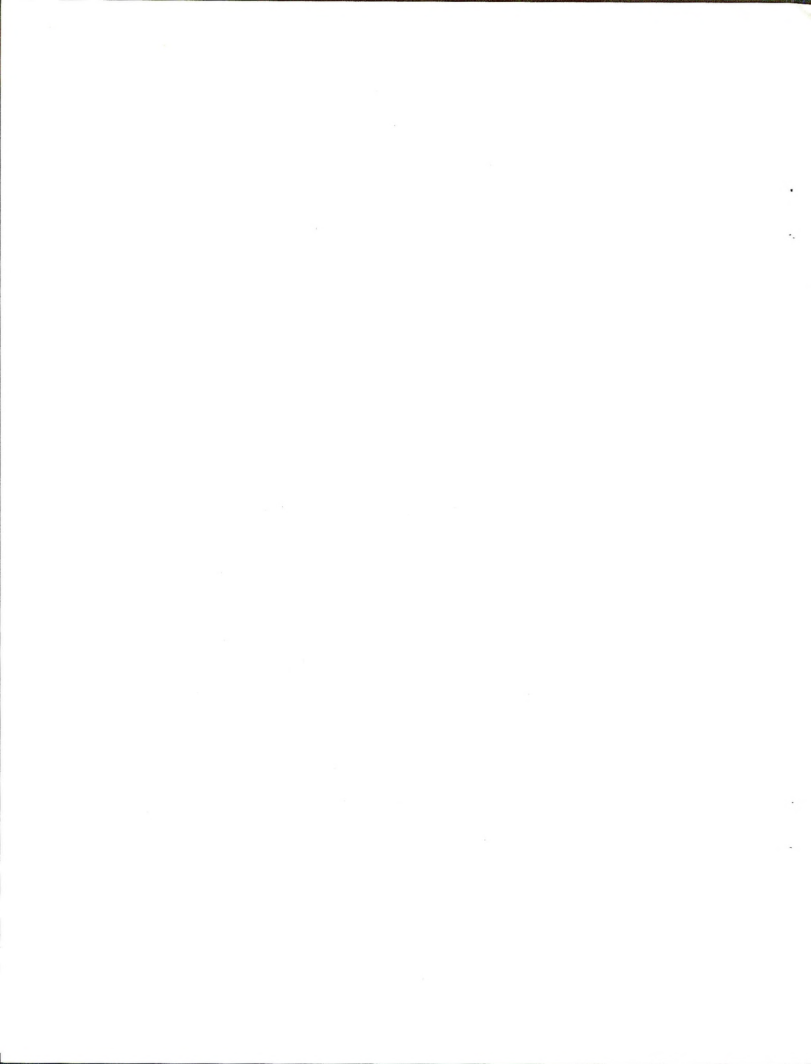




TABLE 2

Table 2 is composed of the most frequent general comments made by the students surveyed.

TABLE 2  
STUDENT COMMENTS

COMMENTS	SCHOOL							TOTAL	RANK*
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
1. Good program.	5	11	12	18	12	23	6	87	1
2. Good instructors.	8	13	2	22	8	9	2	64	2
3. Need more training in skill mastery.	5	2	3	7	3	0	6	26	5
4. Facilities for the program are lacking.	2	4	2	13	1	0	0	22	6
5. Understaffed (Instructional).	14	2	2	10	1	2	1	32	4
6. Need improved class scheduling.	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	25
7. Need more student financial aid.	3	0	5	11	0	2	0	21	8
8. Need to provide improved instructional materials.	1	0	1	6	2	0	1	11	14
9. Need to provide improved class instruction procedures.	3	2	0	6	1	1	2	15	10
10. Program is too accelerated.	3	7	5	14	4	17	4	54	3
11. Program not accelerated enough.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	28

\*Rank order is from 1-28.

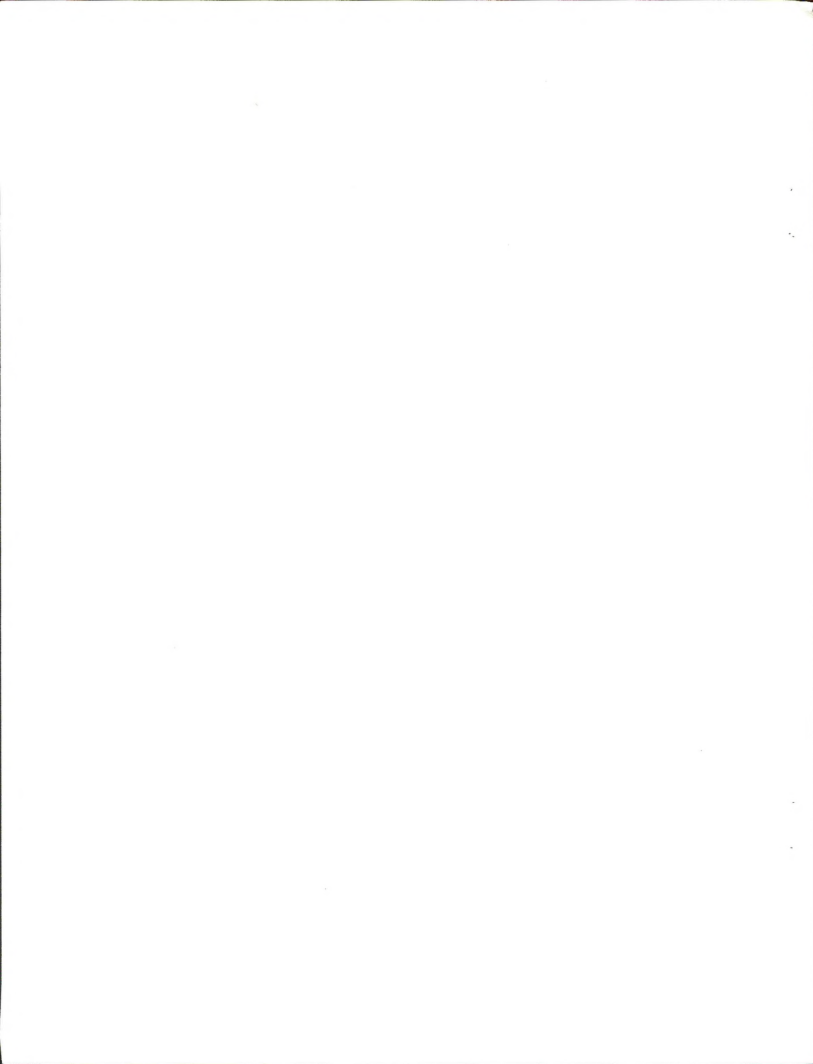


Table 2 continued:

COMMENTS	SCHOOL							TOTAL	RANK
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
12. Program organization could be improved.	1	1	2	4	3	0	1	12	12
13. Prefer more lecture time by instructors.	0	3	0	2	1	1	0	7	19
14. Program builds individual pride.	0	3	1	0	1	5	2	12	12
15. Program is too test oriented.	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	4	23
16. Need a library.	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	26
17. Provide for transfer of training to be acceptable for R.N.	0	0	5	16	1	0	0	22	6
18. Student housing.	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	4	23
19. Provides help with personal problems.	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	6	21
20. Need to provide refresher workshops.	0	0	9	1	0	0	0	10	16
21. Recommend more student input regarding program	0	0	1	0	7	0	0	8	17
22. Provide more assistance in job placement.	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	26
23. Program tends to dehumanize student.	0	0	3	2	4	1	1	11	14
24. Include R.N. training in the overall program.	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	17	9



Table 2 continued:

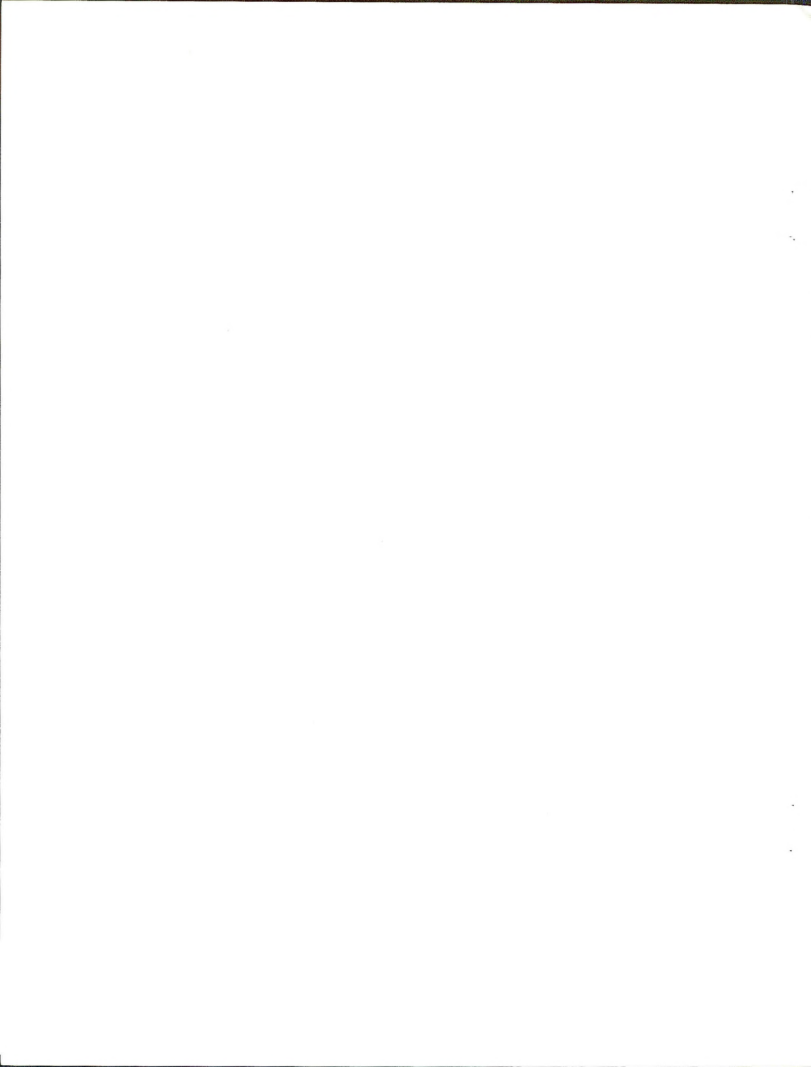
COMMENTS	SCHOOL							TOTAL	RANK
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
25. Extra costs to student should be identified.	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	22
26. Program should improve teacher-student relations.	0	0	0	0	12	0	2	14	11
27. Need more info on law suits for malpractice.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	28
28. Council visit too early for adequate student response.	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	7	19
29. Like the learn-while-doing concept.	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	8	17

Two hundred seventy-six of the 327 students who completed the questionnaire volunteered comments on their training programs. Eighty-seven students said that their program was a good program and 64 praised their instructors.

The foremost complaint made by students was that the program was too accelerated. Many of those making the comment recommended an extension of time to relieve the burden of "too much, too fast."

Many of the students had just begun their clinical training and would have been unable to comment on the amount of time spent in clinical training. Of those who could have had an opinion 26 felt that they needed more skill training at the clinical site. This response when taken in conjunction with the comments that the program is too accelerated indicate that many students feel that they could benefit by more training before accepting a job.

Both practical nursing and associate degree students were concerned about the transferability of credit should they choose to go on for further study in nursing. These students were unsure that their credits would transfer to a baccalaureate degree program and exhibited some anxiety at the thought that they might receive little or no credit for previous education in the nursing field.



Although there was some dissatisfaction with the physical facilities in some schools, this situation should be improved for the 1976-1977 school year. Two schools are constructing new buildings and one is remodeling.

Nursing students are not exempted from feeling the pinch of inflation. Twenty-two felt there should be more financial assistance in the form of loans, grants or help in securing a part time job.

TABLE 3

Twenty-four instructors were interviewed and the results of the 18 responding are listed below.

TABLE 3  
INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS

COMMENTS	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	TOTAL	RANK
1. Instructors could benefit by having nurse training experience and educational course work in teaching.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
2. Feel students could benefit from more clinical experience.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
3. Good program.	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	4	1
4. Need improved communications between agencies and institutions.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
5. Need more health occupations programs.	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2
6. Need a unified curriculum plan.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3





Table 3 continued:

COMMENTS	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	TOTAL	RANK
7. Individualized instruction is helping both slow and fast student.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
8. Likes teaching in the health occupations field.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
9. Teachers are heavily loaded with instruction responsibility.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
10. Recommend transferability of education from one program and institution to another.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
11. Recommend the ladder approach.	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	1
12. Instructors presently unable to take advantage of advanced education programs because on a 12 month contract.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3

Only two of the twelve general comments were repeated a significant number of times. The 18 instructors responding indicated most frequently that the program they were involved in was good. Four instructors commented on the need for the "ladder" concept in the health education programs offered in Montana. Others also spoke of this need.

Two comments were repeated twice. They were recommendations of a system of transferability of educational experiences from one program and institution to another. Their comment has a direct relationship to the "ladder" concept. The other comment was recommendation for expanding the health education program to include more fields such as inhalation therapy, occupational therapy, recreation therapy, pharmacy aide and others.

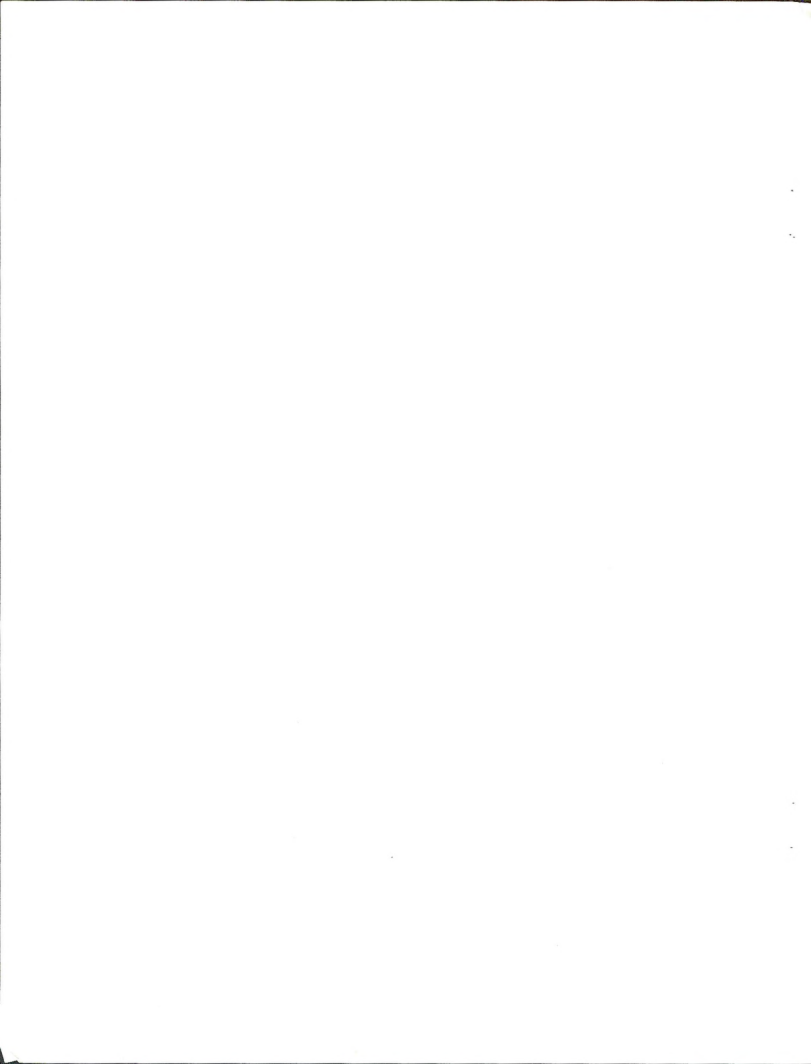


TABLE 4

Table 4 represents the general comments made by eight of the fifteen administrators interviewed during the team visits. Each administrator that commented did so in relationship to the general concerns they had relative to the programs for which they were responsible. Thus only one comment was repeated among the eight responding. Two administrators indicated the need for an established transferability system to accept education from one program or institution to another. Again, this comment is shared among the three groups, students, instructors, and administrators.

TABLE 4  
ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS

COMMENTS	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	TOTAL
1. Recommend a system of transferability of education from one program or institution to another.	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
2. We have a backlog of people waiting to get into the program.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
3. Health occupation ladder concept should be addressed.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
4. Pay scale for health occupation graduates still low.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
5. Inservice training is provided couple times a year.	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

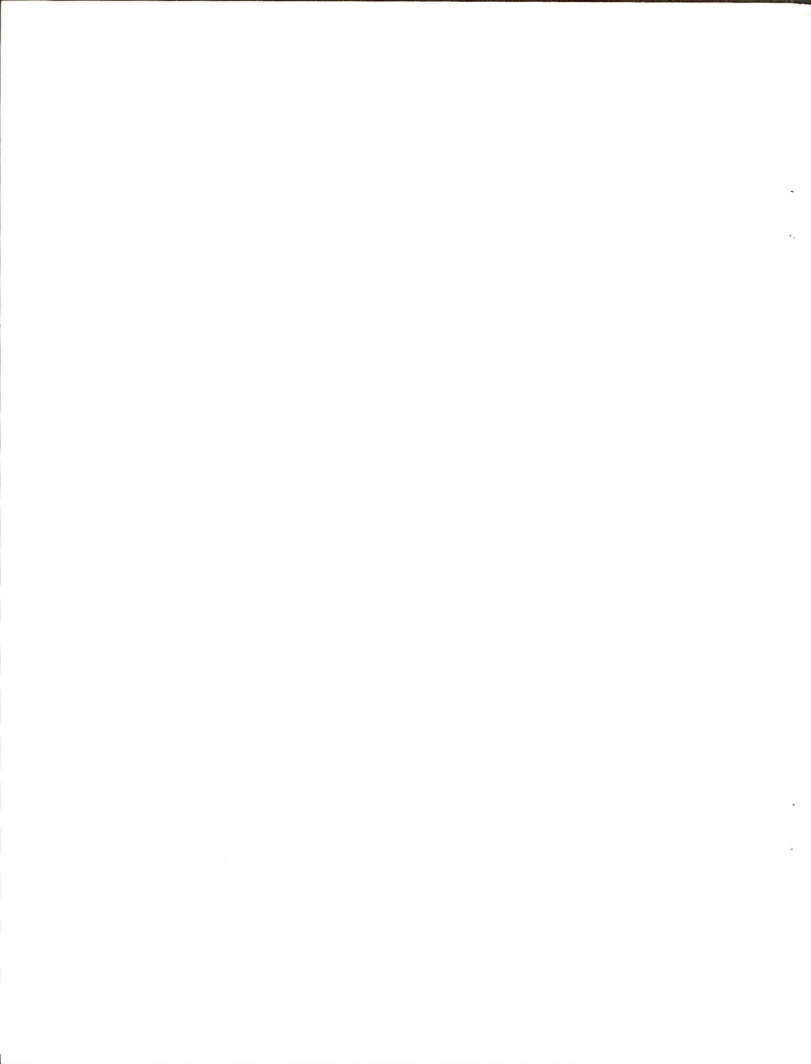


Table 4 continued:

COMMENTS	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	TOTAL
6. Special attention needs to be given to helping minority group students succeed.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
7. Career and guidance information to students needs to be improved and disseminated more widely.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
8. Recommend use of regularly objective based data and information on all programs.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
9. Evaluation of programs should take into consideration effectiveness of the program.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sets forth many salient points, which are important to the success of health occupation education programs. The review was purposely limited to a study of specific health occupations programs: nurse aide, licensed practical nurse, associate degree registered nurse, and dental assistant. This was necessary to maintain a project which was feasible in terms of time and financial cost. Only those programs which were supported financially by vocational education funds available through the Board of Public Education were included in the study. The Board is the state agency responsible for vocational education in Montana. All programs surveyed had the approval of the Board of Public Education and, except for nurse aide, all programs were approved by the state, regional or national licensing board. There is no licensing board for nurse aides.

Students in health-related vocational education in general disagreed as to the time needed for on-the-job training. Forty-five percent



of the beginning licensed practical nurse students sampled thought the program should not include any more on-the-job training. However, 40 percent of the licensed practical nurse students in the advanced programs, 38 percent of the first year associate degree nurse students, and 37 percent of the second year associate degree nurse students sampled, indicated a preference for more on-the-job training. The strongest support for more on-the-job time came from the dental assistants and nurse aid students. Exactly 50 percent of the first year dental assistants surveyed, indicated a preference for more on-the-job training. Although a small sample, 90 percent of the nurse aide students responding favored more on-the-job training.

There appears to be enough indication on the part of those responding to justify the following recommendations.

#### RECOMMENDATION 1

THAT THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION PROVIDE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH INTO THE ADEQUACY OF THE AMOUNT AND TYPE OF CLINICAL EXPERIENCE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS IN HEALTH OCCUPATIONS PROGRAMS.

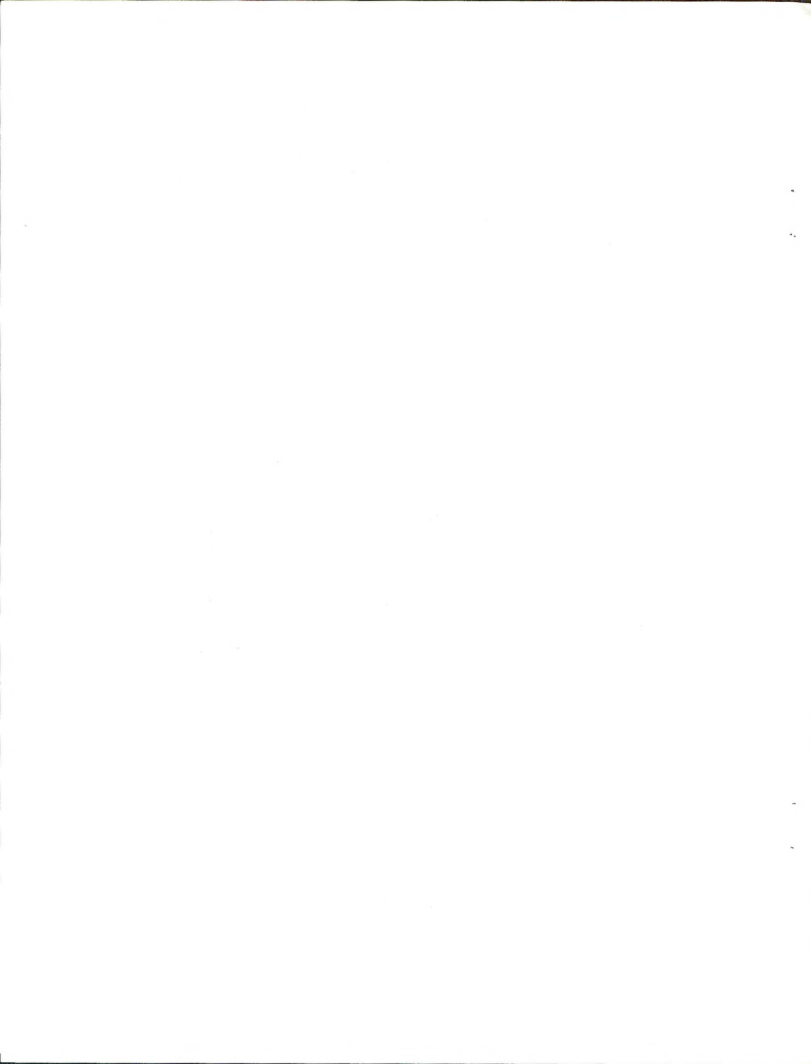
\* \* \* \* \*

The classroom topics and their sequence in the total curriculum of the different health occupation preparation programs were well received by the students. Eighty-five percent found the topics scheduled in progressive sequence. Over three-fourths of them also indicated that the topics were coordinated with relevant work experience for the student. The students did not establish a consensus, however, as to their opinion of student input into the planning of the educational program. There was an almost equal distribution of the responses. Thirty-four percent agreed that there is student input into program planning. Thirty-seven percent disagreed and 29 percent were undecided.

Generally, the students surveyed indicated a satisfaction with the training program with which they were affiliated; but lack of a majority of student opinion regarding student input into program planning indicates a possible need exists in that area. Comments from teachers indicate that local advisory committee, if properly utilized, could be more help in curriculum development and revisions.

#### RECOMMENDATION 2

THAT THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ENCOURAGE LOCAL SCHOOLS TO ACTIVELY INVOLVE ADVISORY COMMITTEES FOR ALL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. STUDENTS SHOULD BE PARTICIPATING MEMBERS OF EACH COMMITTEE.





Students were queried as to their impression of the adequacy of the placement services available to them. Nearly four times as many of the students agreed that placement services were adequate, as disagreed. This apparent strong agreement is overshadowed by the fact that the largest percentage were undecided about the adequacy of the placement services. Fifty-four percent of the responding students were apparently taking a "wait-and-see" position on placement services.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

THAT THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES SO THEY CAN: (1) PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION TO STUDENTS AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS REGARDING JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES AVAILABLE AND (2) ESTABLISH PLACEMENT SERVICES WHERE NEEDED.

\* \* \* \* \*

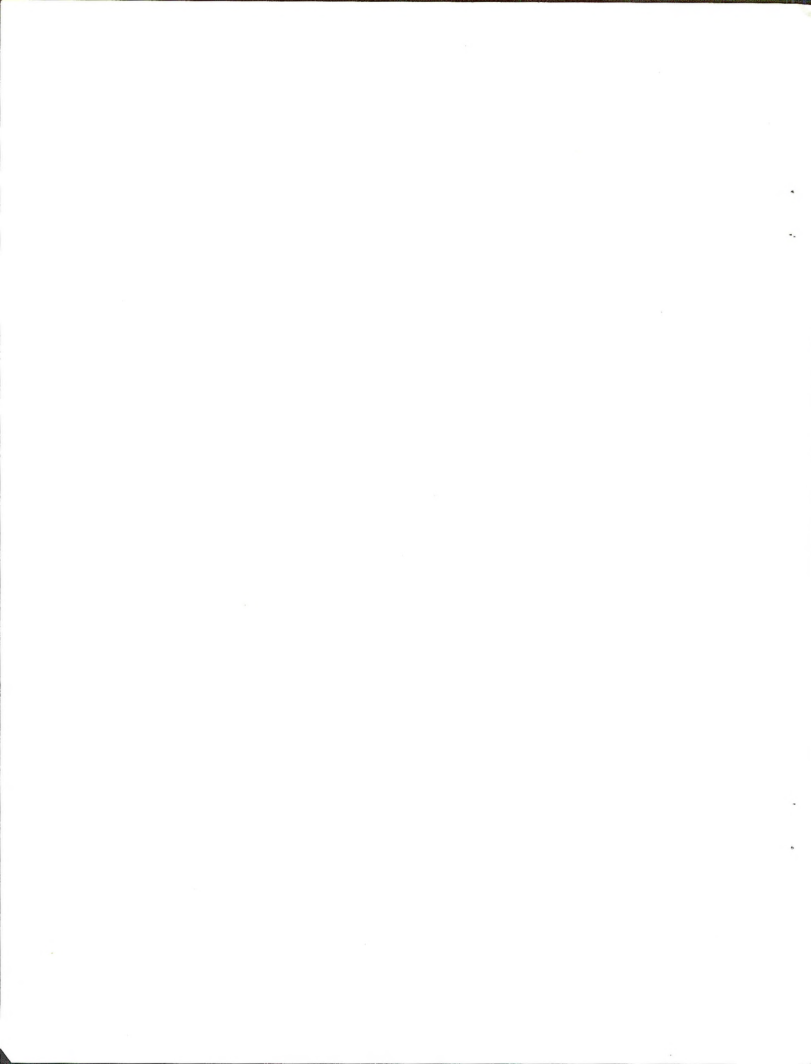
Sixty percent of the students interviewed were aware of information provided by the schools about professional organizations in their field. Three-fourths agreed that progress reports, based upon performance objectives, are used by the faculty in counseling students. Comments by students indicated a strong preference for this type of reporting. In the areas of professional organizations and progress reporting, students agree that counseling information is satisfactory.

### RECOMMENDATION 4

THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ENCOURAGE SCHOOLS TO CONTINUE USING PERFORMANCE BASED OBJECTIVE PROGRESS REPORTS IN HEALTH OCCUPATIONS EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

\* \* \* \* \*

Instructors of health occupations programs were overwhelmingly supportive of the program. Administrators strongly endorsed the programs but did not agree with the instructors that present programs are meeting health service training needs of the communities. They also disagreed that pre-service teacher education in the health occupations field is adequate. The administrators strongly emphasized that community health education needs are not being fully met and that pre-service teacher preparation programs are not meeting the need for health occupations instructors.



#### RECOMMENDATION 5

THAT THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN COOPERATION WITH THE BOARD OF REGENTS CONTINUE THEIR REVIEW OF TEACHER PREPARATION IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH OCCUPATIONS EDUCATION.

\* \* \* \* \*

Responses, both written and oral, from students, instructors, and administrators indicated considerable interest in the "ladder concept" of health occupations education. The "ladder concept" is an education design which provides opportunity for individuals to progress smoothly and efficiently in their educational pursuits. A key part of this design is the acceptance of previous education and/or experiences of the individual in succeeding segments of training. An example would be the acceptance, toward meeting graduation requirements, of those verified skills and competencies of a licensed practical nurse as he continues toward a baccalaureate degree in nursing. The concept has met with success in other states such as California, South Dakota, and Utah.

#### RECOMMENDATION 6

THAT THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION, IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER BOARDS AND AGENCIES, SHOULD IMPLEMENT THE "LADDER CONCEPT" IN HEALTH OCCUPATIONS EDUCATION PROGRAMS. THIS WOULD ALLOW STUDENT MOBILITY WITHOUT NEEDLESS REPETITION OF TRAINING.

